

American Diploma Project Network: Status Update

P-16 Council
Agenda Item V-B
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Between 2001-03, Kentucky was selected as one of five pilot states of the American Diploma Project. Kentucky's participation was overseen by the P-16 Council and drew on recommendations made by the P-16 Literacy and Mathematics Alignment Teams and endorsed by the P-16 Council in 2001. The ADP's development of college and workplace readiness benchmarks and work samples in English and mathematics resulted in the national report, *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*. The ADP benchmarks formed the basis for revisions to the Kentucky Core Content for Assessment and the Program of Studies and provided the foundation for Kentucky's Statewide Postsecondary Placement Policy, which was the first such statewide postsecondary agreement guaranteeing credit-bearing placement based on demonstrated skills and a statewide scoring threshold.

Shortly following the completion of what became known as "Phase One" of the ADP, Kentucky joined 12 other states to form the ADP Network, which agreed to fulfill the following four policy actions, which can be found, with fuller implementation implications, on the Achieve, Inc., Web site (www.achieve.org):

- 1. Align high school standards and assessments with the knowledge and skills required for success after high school.** This requires that state postsecondary systems and institutions define the knowledge and skills required for enrolling in credit-bearing courses, that employers be clearer about the skills necessary to succeed in the global knowledge economy, and that the K-12 system align its standards and assessments with those college and workplace expectations.
- 2. Require all high school graduates to take challenging courses that actually prepare them for life after high school.** ADP guidelines advise that states require all students to complete a common set of high school courses that will provide them with meaningful options, including postsecondary education and well-paying jobs. They note that states should pay attention to the content that students are taught rather than simply to course titles and Carnegie units alone and, at the same time, give schools and teachers the flexibility to teach in ways that engage students and match their learning styles. ADP research indicates that, at a minimum, high school course requirements need to include the content generally taught in four years of rigorous English and four years of mathematics, including algebra I, geometry, algebra II, and data analysis and statistics.
- 3. Streamline the assessment system so that the tests students take in high school also can serve as readiness tests for college and work.**

4. Hold high schools accountable for graduating students who are ready for college or careers and hold postsecondary institutions accountable for students' success once enrolled.

Kentucky has undertaken the following steps to address the above policy action commitments:

- In 2004, the Council on Postsecondary Education convened representatives of each of the public postsecondary institutions in the disciplines of English and mathematics who agreed to a statewide standard of college-readiness in English and mathematics based on the ADP benchmarks and a statewide threshold, based on the ACT, for placement into credit-bearing courses (and higher tiers in mathematics).
- From 2004-06, the Kentucky Department of Education convened groups of teachers and postsecondary faculty to revise Core Content for Assessment standards and the Program of Study using the ADP benchmarks in English and mathematics. In 2006, the Kentucky Board of Education approved the revisions.
- In 2004, the Partnership for Kentucky Schools (now Partnership for Successful Schools) piloted the State Scholars initiative bringing business leaders into schools to clarify employer expectations and explain the benefits of a rigorous curriculum.
- In 2006, the KBE approved revised minimum high school graduation requirements, effective for the class of 2012, that include algebra I, geometry, and algebra II and mathematics each year of high school. At the same time, the KBE approved regulations governing the award of the high school diploma to include performance based credit systems and separating funds from seat time.
- In 2006, the Kentucky General Assembly passed Senate Bill 130, requiring (beginning in 2007-08) diagnostic assessment of all eighth- and tenth-graders using the ACT Educational Progress Assessment System (EPAS), administration of the ACT to all eleventh-graders, and the administration on a volunteer basis of three WorkKeys components of the Kentucky Employability Certificate (reading for information, locating information, and applied mathematics). These assessments evaluate students' readiness for high school, college, technical school, and the workplace and provide appropriate and timely intervention.
- In 2005, the KDE began development of end-of-course assessments in mathematics. In 2006, the Kentucky General Assembly provided a pilot program for high school end-of-course assessments.
- During fall 2007, a sample of college seniors from Kentucky's postsecondary institutions will be asked to complete a standardized assessment test to measure college-level learning. This project will be coordinated nationally to provide comparisons with other states.
- Kentucky's four-year institutions implemented the National Survey of Student Engagement in 2001, 2003, and 2005 to collect quality of learning data from undergraduate students that

can be used to support institutional improvement and accountability. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System is implementing the Community College Survey of Student Engagement in the spring of 2006. In 2006, the KDE secured federal funding to implement a longitudinal data tracking system based on a unique student identifier, which will position the Commonwealth to track student progress to and through graduation and into postsecondary education.

- The CPE's new performance-based funding model rewards institutions for degree production.

Kentucky's participation in the ADP Network has helped focus many of the Commonwealth's initiatives on creating a seamless system of education, to graduate students prepared for life and work, and to raise the level of educational attainment and the quality of life for all Kentuckians.

Kentucky's system, nevertheless, lacks the statewide and cross-sector data capacity to formulate data-driven policy making and analysis and to provide cross-sector accountability. To advance its P-16 agenda, Kentucky must develop a P-16 data system.